

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 10. NONCLINICIAN PH.D. SCIENTISTS

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
10.01 General	10-1
10.02 Recruitment	10-1
10.03 Eligibility.....	10-1
10.04 Appointment	10-1
10.05 Salary Support for Nonclinician PH.D. Principal Investigators	10-2
10.06 Research Career Scientist and Associate Research Career Scientist	10-2
10.07 Centralized Positions of Research Scientist	10-3

CHAPTER 10. NONCLINICIAN PH.D. SCIENTISTS**10.01 GENERAL**

Nonclinician Ph.D. scientists contribute to VA medical research programs not only because of their direct contributions to scientific knowledge but also because they serve as a training source for physician-investigators and potential physician-investigators. Thus, they furnish an important expertise which is complementary to the research programs of the clinical staff.

10.02 RECRUITMENT

Medical centers wishing to recruit Ph.D. scientists salaried from Medical Research Service funds have the following options:

- a. Recruitment into approved positions other than principal investigator, e.g., co-investigator, which are not centralized and which are funded in Cost Centers 101, 103, 106, 107, or 109. New Ph.D. positions in Cost Center 101 must be approved by the Director, Medical Research Service.
- b. Recruitment as principal investigator or co-principal investigator of a centrally reviewed Cost Center 103, 106 or 109 program. A principal investigator's merit review proposal (Cost Center 103) must be approved with a fundable priority before appointment to VA.
- c. Recruitment as a Research Career Scientist or Associate Research Career Scientist salaried in Cost Center 110. These awards represent recognition by VA of a select group of highly distinguished investigators.

10.03 ELIGIBILITY

- a. To be eligible for Merit Review support, newly recruited nonclinician Ph.D., principal investigators who request 5/8 or more of their salary from Merit Review must receive a fundable priority score in Merit Review.
- b. New nonclinician Ph.D. principal investigators who request less than 5/8 of their salary from Merit Review and who receive a fundable priority may, in some cases, be approved for appointment to VA by the RSEC (Research Scientist Evaluation Committee). The committee will determine eligibility for funding based on the justification provided by the medical center Director. Proof of a 5/8 or more geographic time commitment to a VA medical center constitutes justification of eligibility.
- c. The research laboratories of all VA nonclinician Ph.D. principal investigators must be located within VA medical center. However, the Director, Medical Research Service, will, on a case-by-case evaluation, consider exceptions to this requirement.

10.04 APPOINTMENT

- a. Nonclinician Ph.D. scientists whose salaries are funded by Medical Research Service will usually be on time-limited appointments (i.e., temporary, term, or Schedule B Excepted Appointments).
- b. **Exception.** The Research Career Scientist or Associate Research Career Scientist designation authorizes the medical center to seek a career civil service appointment for

these scientists; however, the awardees must compete successfully for such an appointment within the Federal Personnel System.

10.05 SALARY SUPPORT FOR NONCLINICIAN PH.D. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

a. Salaries of nonclinician Ph.D. principal investigators are no longer paid from Cost Center 104 funds, effective March 1977. Principal investigators now receiving salary in Cost Center 104 will be continued in this category as long as they receive significant research funding as a principal investigator, either VA Medical Research Service support or extramural support from other nationally recognized organizations that utilize a quality peer review procedure equivalent to that of the Medical Research Service. The peer review must be competitive and must be accompanied by a fundable priority score. These investigators may not request salary support in the budget of a merit review proposal.

b. An investigator who has extra-VA salary support or Medical Research Service salary support from a source other than cost center 104, or 110 [Research Career Scientists and Associate Research Career Scientists] and who is applying for Merit Review support has the option to:

(1) Request salary support as principal investigator or co-investigator in Cost Center 103 (Merit Review instructions, M-3, pt. 11, ch. 4); this support should be proportionate to the commitment of time required to conduct the research outlined in the proposal. In the event that a principal investigator receives an approval with a fundable priority and subsequently is disapproved or approved with an unfundable priority, salary will be continued for 1 year beyond the termination date of the investigator's ongoing research proposal, providing the investigator continues to be employed by VA medical center.

(2) Continue to receive total or partial salary support in another research program or common resources.

10.06 RESEARCH CAREER SCIENTIST AND ASSOCIATE RESEARCH CAREER SCIENTIST

a. The titles Research Career Scientist and Associate Research Career Scientist may be awarded to a limited number of VA researchers nominated by their medical centers and approved by the RSEC.

b. The designation Research Career Scientist is a means of acknowledging the achievements and contributions of selected senior scientists. The designation Associate Research Career Scientist may be awarded to more junior scientists who are productive investigators capable of doing independent scientific research and compete successfully for peer reviewed research funds.

c. Research Career Scientists and Associate Research Career Scientists must evidence:

(1) A record of successful past and current VA Merit Review support and/or successful competition as a principal investigator for significant extra-VA research funding from a national research program(s) that utilizes a level of scientific peer review equivalent to that of the Medical Research Service;

(2) Publications in referred journals, especially first author publications in high quality professional journals;

(3) A minimum 5/8 time commitment to VA;

(4) Membership in national and/or international professional societies and invitations to speak at their meetings.

(5) Member of national Scientific Advisory Committees and/or editorial staffs of scientific journals.

(6) International recognition by peers as a leader in a research field;

(7) Interaction with clinicians in support of the patient care program of VA medical center; and

(8) An active role in training of young scientists, and in formal teaching.

(9) The Associate Research Career Scientist should hold a university appointment as Associate Professor, and the Research Career Scientist should hold an appointment as Professor.

d. Each VA medical center may nominate up to two individuals for Research Career Scientist and two individuals for Associate Research Career Scientist during a fiscal year. Nominations must be carefully evaluated and approved by the R&D committee and the medical center Director, and forwarded through appropriate channels to Director, Medical Research Service (151F). Applications must be received in Medical Research Service by April 1 for summer review, or October 1 for winter review. The original and **nine** copies of the application and all letters and supporting documents are required for review. Detailed instructions for preparing nominations may be obtained from Special Staff Assistant to Director, Medical Research Service (151F).

e. The RSEC will evaluate all nominations and recommend approval with an assigned priority score, or disapproval to the Director, Medical Research Service.

f. Associate Research Career Scientists and Research Career Scientists receive renewable tenure (assurance of continued salary support from Cost Center 110) for 5 and 7 years, respectively. A request for renewal of tenure must be reviewed and approved by the RSEC 6 months before completion of tenure. Awards of career scientists will be terminated if they do not have, at the time of RSEC renewal review, significant peer reviewed funding as principal investigators from Merit Review or other nationally recognized organizations that utilize a quality of peer review equivalent to that of VA. The original and nine copies of the following are required for evaluation of renewal of career scientists awards:

(1) Medical center Director's formal transmittal letter containing an assessment of the incumbent's role at the facility, including a statement of work relationship with other investigators and interaction at the medical center, and the recommendation pertaining to this request

(2) Current curriculum vitae and bibliography. This must conform to format supplied by Medical Research Service (151F).

10.07 CENTRALIZED POSITIONS OF RESEARCH SCIENTIST

a. The RSEC reviews all nominations for centralized research scientist positions, GS-14 and above, using guidelines which provide a systematic approach to the consideration of credentials. (See VHS&RA Supp., MP-5, pt. 1, ch. 250)

b. Detailed instruction for preparing nominations may be obtained from the Special Staff Assistant, Medical Research Service (151F). The original and nine copies of the following materials are required for evaluation of the nominee:

(1) Medical center Director's formal transmittal letter containing an assessment of nominee's role at the facility and the recommendation pertaining to this request.

(2) A letter from the ACOS for R&D assessing the nominee, including a statement of work relationship with other investigators and interaction at the medical center.

(3) Position description signed by immediate supervisor and medical center Director. Optional Form 8, item 15E, should indicate title of position and grade proposed.

(4) VA Form 5-3963, Medical Center Position Report, and VA Form 5-4670, Position Classification Worksheet for Research Positions. The letter must be completed and signed by each member of the local evaluation panel. The position report must document and justify the medical center's determination as to coverage under or exclusion from the Performance Management and Recognition System.

(5) Curriculum vitae and bibliography. **This must conform to format supplied by Medical Service (151F).**

(6) Names of five leaders in the investigator's field of research, furnished by the nominee to whom a request for evaluation has been sent. If the nominee holds an academic position, a letter of recommendation must be requested from the Department Chairperson. Letters from respondents should be mailed directly to the Director, Medical Research Service (151F).

(7) Nominee's length of time in present grade.

(8) Reprints or copies of two publications representative of the applicant's best work.

c. **The original and nine copies** of these materials must be sent to Director, Medical Research Service (151F) by April 1 for summer review, or October 1, for winter review.